



FEMA Federal Incident Response Support Team vehicle loads onto U.S. Coast Guard C-130J for transport to Puerto Rico after Hurricane Dean

# Supporting Homeland

**A**t this writing, a tropical storm floods south Texas. A major hurricane churns west across the Caribbean with a potential landfall along the Texas coast. Wildfires in the Western United States consume nearly 75,000 acres. U.S. Navy divers assist in the recovery of victims of a bridge collapse in Minneapolis. The space shuttle is aloft with a worrisome gouge in its protective tiles. Russian long-range bombers have resumed patrols that in the past have probed American and Canadian air defense identification zones. Vessels of interest approach American ports with suspicious persons on board.

Each of these events could require the North American Aerospace Defense Command (NORAD) or U.S. Northern Command (USNORTHCOM) to respond

to defend the homeland or support U.S. civil authorities in their response to various threats. These are the mission essential tasks of the dual commands at Peterson Air Force Base in Colorado Springs. Many organizations see themselves as unique, and we are no different. Our claim to that status flows from our area of responsibility for USNORTHCOM and our area of operations for NORAD: the North American continent.

## Mutually Beneficial Collaboration

The events of September 11, 2001, revealed gaps and seams across government that both contributed to the success of the attacks and hampered an effective response to the consequences. One result was that the traditional NORAD focus on the external threat changed radically to address the need

to look inward. Another was the creation of the first new geographic combatant command for the American homeland since George Washington's Continental Army. In 2002, the National Security Advisor and Secretary of Defense directed that each combatant command establish a Joint Interagency Coordination Group (JIACG) in order to enhance interdepartmental coordination.<sup>1</sup>

As USNORTHCOM became a reality, the plankholders saw that the JIACG concept could be invaluable in building and maintaining relationships with Federal departments and agencies as well as state and local governments, nongovernmental organizations, and the private sector, all key players in homeland defense and security. The bicommand leadership established the Interagency Coordination Directorate as a primary staff directorate, "dual-hatted" to both NORAD and USNORTHCOM, to facilitate the interagency coordination process across the commands.

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As 9/11 was instrumental to the establishment of USNORTHCOM and its interagency structure, Hurricane Katrina provided impetus to move beyond interagency communication and coordination to mutually beneficial collaboration. The hurricane's aftermath demonstrated that no single state or Federal agency has the resources to respond to a catastrophic event, whether natural or manmade. Furthermore, while there have been significant areas for improvement, the Title 10 military response coordinated by USNORTHCOM to support the national effort demonstrated processes and capabilities that the other departments and agencies recognized as valuable. Doors opened across government—to include non-Federal agencies—to embrace closer integration of plans and operations. Our challenge has been to pursue integration within the unique strategic environment of homeland security.

We at NORAD and USNORTHCOM must become adept at integrating our efforts with those of our mission partners. The USNORTHCOM commander's *Vision 2020* states that supporting and enabling other agencies, working toward common objec-

governments serve their constituents through constitutions that define the responsibilities of their respective leaders. Governors often cite Article 10 of the Constitution: "The powers not delegated to the United States by the Constitution, nor prohibited by it to the States, are reserved to the States respectively, or to the people." While blurred by time and precedent, this article still bars the Federal Government from many direct actions within the domestic arena. There is shared state and Federal accountability for the defense and security of our homeland. Thus, USNORTHCOM must work in concert with states and their Governors to ensure integrated planning and response across the homeland defense, homeland security, and civil support mission spectrum.

Unique among geographical combatant commands, USNORTHCOM must plan and respond collaboratively with over 54 sovereign entities—the states, territories, and tribal nations within its area of responsibility, in addition to our neighbors, Canada and Mexico. The Department of Homeland Security (DHS) National Response Plan, published in 2005, provides the structure and mecha-

nisms for national level policy and operational coordination for domestic incident management. While not a plan in the *military* sense, it describes the structure and processes comprising a national approach to domestic incident management designed to integrate efforts and resources. It assigns departmental responsibilities for 15 emergency support functions as coordinating, primary, or supporting agencies. DOD is a supporting agency to all 15 emergency support functions, and USNORTHCOM has responsibility within DOD for coordinating and controlling Title 10 forces, which are committed to Federal support. The key principle in this environment is that DOD and USNORTHCOM are almost always in support of another Federal department or agency to provide defense support of civil authorities.

The 2006 QDR defined eight roadmaps to guide DOD programs from 2008 to 2013. One that particularly impacts USNORTHCOM's interagency engagement is the Building Partnership Capacity (BPC) Roadmap, which places a high priority on building security capabilities into our international and domestic partners to mitigate the likelihood of commitment of DOD resources and capabilities to support them. Our principal international BPC partner is Mexico, whose capabilities to interdict transnational threats before they reach our common border constitute a vital national interest. Domestically, contributing to the response capacity

# Partners

By JAMES M. CASTLE

tives, and building the capacity of partners are indispensable elements in this effort. Unity of effort requires that strategies, plans, operations, and future technologies be closely coordinated with partners. We must work as part of a unified interagency team to address threats and to support other agencies in complex interagency operations.

In addition to Department of Defense (DOD) mission guidance to the commands (such as the Unified Command Plan and Joint Strategic Capabilities Plan), three key documents define our interagency engagement and relationships with Federal, state, tribal, nongovernmental, and private sector mission partners. First and foremost is the U.S. Constitution; second is the National Response Plan; and last is the Building Partnership Capacity Roadmap of the 2006 Quadrennial Defense Review (QDR).

America's strategies for providing homeland defense and civil support are founded on constitutional principles. State and Federal



U.S. Army (Damon A. Dickinson)

Soldiers from Fort Lewis help National Interagency Fire Center fight wildfires in Washington



of DHS and the states directly mitigates the impacts of manmade or natural disasters on citizens at home.

### What We Do

The commander's JIACG constitutes the vital heart of interagency coordination for NORAD and USNORTHCOM. It is comprised of representatives from 40-plus agencies:

- DOD and others<sup>2</sup>
- contingency representatives for planning, exercises, and crises
- contacts throughout the national interagency community
- military liaison officers from other combatant commands and subordinate joint task forces and Service components.

The USNORTHCOM Interagency Coordination Directorate provides the "homeroom" for the JIACG and integrates the coordination of the command's staff with the departments and agencies represented.<sup>3</sup> The mission essential task of the JIACG is to provide the commander and staff with the national context, both governmental and nongovernmental, of a given scenario so he can apply the military resources and capabilities at his disposal in the most appropriate and effective manner. The JIACG performs planning, operations, training and education, and engagement activities to accomplish that mission essential task.

**Planning.** All of the contingency plans for NORAD and USNORTHCOM execution of missions include an Annex V (Interagency), which provides a single source reference for the combatant command to request interagency support or provide support to non-DOD agencies; it also lays the groundwork for coordinating with U.S. Government civilian agencies, international civilian organizations, and nongovernmental organizations. Understanding our partners' capabilities, limitations, availability, and authorities that govern military and civilian activities in the area of operations is accomplished during the deliberate planning process. Our agency representatives ensure that plans are consistent and integrated with the plans, processes, and priorities of other organizations, contributing to a synergy of national effort. Furthermore, USNORTHCOM has furnished planners to Federal and state partners both to provide an understanding of

the military planning process and to ensure that expected military support is consistent with DOD capabilities and processes. In preparation for the 2006 hurricane season, for example, USNORTHCOM planners assisted the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) Gulf Coast Recovery Office, as well as state emergency managers in gulf coast states, with plans for evacuation and search and rescue operations.

A key effort begun in preparation for the 2006 hurricane season was the development of pre-scripted mission assignments (PSMAs). Under the National Response Plan, interdepartmental requests for resources and capabilities require a formal request procedure that details the "five Ws" of the support needed, including estimated costs. Once approved by the Secretary of Defense, these requests become mission assignments from the lead agency to the supporting agency. The response to Hurricane Katrina revealed that the back-and-forth communications (to clearly define the requested capability) were burdensome and time-consuming. During the winter and spring of 2006, USNORTHCOM collaborated with FEMA and the Joint Direc-

tor of Military Support (JDOMS) on the Joint Staff to write 26 PSMAs for commonly needed DOD assets based on FEMA's top priorities. Some of these include command and control nodes, aviation, logistics, and health support assets. Although each request must still be approved by the Secretary of Defense, the resource information required has been validated at every level to expedite the request process. It also readily converts the approved mission assignment into a DOD request for forces for DOD resourcing.

Development of command plans typically involves establishment of interagency working groups that convene as needed to coordinate and integrate the plans with those of our partners. Some, such as the Law Enforcement Working Group and the State Engagement Working Group, meet regularly to review the status of development of multiple plans and update ongoing engagement activities. Others, such as the Pandemic Influenza or PSMA Working Groups, have been focused on a specific plan or task.

**Operations.** Day-to-day, the tip of the spear for interagency operations is the interagency desk at the NORAD and

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*contributing to the response capacity of DHS and the states directly mitigates the impacts of manmade or natural disasters on citizens at home*

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Member of Mobile Diving and Salvage Unit from Little Creek, Virginia, at scene of collapse of I-35 Bridge in Minneapolis

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USNORTHCOM Command Center. This desk monitors activities of the DHS National Operations Center and those of Federal partners in order to maintain situational awareness of incidents that could have implications for NORAD and USNORTHCOM. The desk has direct access to our three tiers of interagency representatives in case additional information is needed.

If an incident requires a crisis response, the command can move quickly through various tailored venues to a 24/7 adaptive headquarters organization consisting of the Command Center, Future Operations Center (FOC), and Future Plans Center (FPC) supported by three operations support groups: the Joint Support Group (JSG), Information Support Group (ISG), and Interagency Coordination Group (ICG). The ICG stands up in a conference room, preconfigured with 24 workstations and secure video teleconference capability. The Interagency Coordination Directorate provides a DOD watch crew, and representatives from departments and agencies whose expertise is needed for that particular scenario fill the remaining workstations.

Additionally, we send interagency coordination officers to the FOC and FPC and receive a JSG officer. The ICG contributes a running estimate in the form of a JIACG assessment, which is presented at least daily to the commander and staff during the command battle rhythm briefings. The

JIACG assessment identifies who is the primary Federal agency, what the anticipated implications for DOD support may be, and what all of our interagency partners are contributing for that particular reporting period. It makes sense of the volumes of interagency information flowing in from myriad sources and provides the “So what?” to the commander. During Hurricane Katrina, the ICG operated around the clock for 6 weeks.

*Training and Education.* While existing military programs train Servicemembers for roles in traditional combatant commands, they do not prepare them for the unique requirements of homeland defense and civil support missions in the USNORTHCOM area of responsibility. Specific skills and knowledge must be acquired, and that is usually accomplished after a Servicemember is assigned to the command. Staff personnel require specific technical expertise in areas such as agroterrorism; hurricane and earthquake response operations; chemical, biological, radiological, nuclear, and high yield explosives response operations; law enforcement coordination; and interagency information-sharing. To meet these needs, USNORTHCOM leverages both DOD and non-DOD training venues to prepare personnel to deal with the challenges, processes, terminology, and roles involved in interagency coordination.

Using the command’s online Learning Management System, personnel can enroll

in specific online and resident interagency courses (such as FEMA’s Emergency Management Institute) to gain knowledge of existing interagency programs, systems, and incident-specific planning and operations. These courses also provide an interagency perspective instead of a DOD perspective. Personnel then enroll in the online Joint Knowledge Development and Distribution Capability courses. USNORTHCOM also presents a combination online and resident course focusing on defense support of civil authorities. This course brings together an interagency audience, ensuring that participants gain a broader understanding of interagency coordination.

Training must be tested to determine readiness to execute operational missions, and our conduct of and participation in interagency exercises are key to that assessment. We must create a realistic interagency environment that replicates national level agencies, regional Federal agencies, state and local authorities, and the private sector at all

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Space shuttle *Endeavour* arrives at launch pad



NASA (George Shelton)

levels. In addition to the complexities of the U.S. interagency environment, we strive to replicate the international environment with Canada and Mexico.

USNORTHCOM, in cooperation with DHS, has been involved in developing the National Exercise Program (NEP), which provides guidance for the U.S. Government to implement a cohesive exercise program. It directs agency participation in National Level Exercises (NLEs) and uses a tiered approach. Tier 1 exercises require actual agency leader and staff participation, including department secretaries or their deputies and agency operations centers. Tier 2 exercises require multi-agency contributions to a National Simulation Cell, which replicates Federal agencies at both the national and regional levels with agency representatives who role-play for their organizations. Both Tier 1 and 2 NLEs are intended to focus on national level strategic issues.

Prior to formal NEP approval, DHS, NORAD, and USNORTHCOM coordinated



and conducted two Tier 2 exercises, Vigilant Shield 07 (VS-07) and Ardent Sentry/Northern Edge 07 (AS/NE-07) under draft NEP guidelines. Canada also participated in both exercises. Vigilant Shield 08 and NLE 2-08 are the first two formal NLEs under the approved program. Both USNORTHCOM's Canadian counterpart, Canada Command, and Public Safety Canada intend to participate in these two NLEs. As stakeholders internalize the benefits of the National Exercise Program, DHS, NORAD, and USNORTHCOM will further refine planning and execution synchronization with its agency partners.

**Engagement.** Engagement with interagency mission partners is a core requirement for USNORTHCOM in order to integrate with them for a wide array of contingency plans. The first years of USNORTHCOM's existence focused on identifying critical partners in homeland defense and homeland security and engaging them to establish mutually beneficial relationships and interoperability. The establishment of the Department of Homeland Security in 2003 was a watershed event, giving a primary counterpart to DOD for homeland security. We have previously discussed the diverse representation from Federal partners on the USNORTHCOM staff, the direct result of these engagements. In recent years, we have operationalized

**U.S. Coastguardsman boards HMCS *Preserver* during exercise Frontier Sentinel, designed to help with U.S.-Canadian maritime interdiction**



U.S. Navy (Andrew McCord)

these relationships with increased integration of operations, plans, and exercises. While we continue to enhance these Federal relationships, the breadth of response across national and international agencies requires the development of similar relationships with states and the National Guard, private sector, the science and technology community, and Canada and Mexico.

### States

In the homeland, local first responders and emergency medical professionals will always be the first to arrive on the disaster scene. They may be augmented by nongovernmental organizations such as the local Red Cross chapter, state agencies, or, by the Governor's direction, the state's National Guard. If Federal resources, including DOD assets, are required, these generally augment the local and state emergency managers through a joint field office. Since USNORTHCOM will coordinate and control any Title 10 response, we must understand the capabilities and requirements of our state mission partners.

We must build strong, mutually beneficial, and trusting relationships with state partners to facilitate collaborative planning, ensure unity of effort in response, contribute to a common operating picture, ensure coordinated communication strategies, and build partner capacity through advocacy. The collaborative result is to prevent incidents, save lives, protect infrastructure, and promote resiliency.

Our state and National Guard engagement program pursues active and mutually beneficial relationships with the National Guard Bureau; with Governors and their homeland security advisors, emergency managers, and adjutants general; and with congressional delegations. We have made good progress working with separate state players, initially focusing on those with historic Federal response requirements such as the gulf coast hurricane states and Western wildfire states, but we recognize that it will take time to build relationships with all 54 states and territories. We have also engaged with several important umbrella associations, such as the National Governors Association and the National Emergency Management Association.

### National Guard

Short of federalization, the National Guard is our most important interagency

partner because of its key role in state response. The first military personnel to respond to an incident will almost always be National Guard Soldiers and Airmen. USNORTHCOM's relationship with the National Guard is critical to both homeland defense and civil support. Partnership with the Guard will ensure these organizations train as they fight—with unity of purpose and effort. USNORTHCOM must ensure Guard equities, capabilities, and sensitivities are accurately included in all NORAD and USNORTHCOM efforts and that Guardsmen assigned to the command are empowered to present the unique Guard point of view at every turn. A Senate caucus and the White House Katrina report recently called for more Guard representation at USNORTHCOM, a point reiterated strongly by the Commission on the Guard and Reserve.

### Private Sector

The Interagency Coordination Directorate is also leading USNORTHCOM's effort to make strides in private sector awareness. While the command is not chartered to deal directly with the private sector writ large, the command must work with its partners—particularly the DHS Office of Private Sector Initiatives—to understand how private sector

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*the establishment of the Department of Homeland Security was a watershed event, giving a primary counterpart to DOD for homeland security*

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plans and processes impact planning and operations in the USNORTHCOM area of responsibility. The private sector's ability to harness assets to apply to contingencies is unsurpassed and is often preferable to DOD action. To ensure unity of effort and facilitate efficiency and responsiveness, USNORTHCOM must understand how potential DOD support to civil authorities might dovetail with private sector plans. To accomplish that, we have engaged umbrella organizations such as the U.S. Chamber of Commerce, Business Executives in National Security, and others.

### Science and Technology Community

Given the complexities of interoperability and collaboration with our diverse

interagency partners, science and technology offer enabling solutions. USNORTHCOM maintains an ongoing engagement with several Federal agencies related to science and technology initiatives, with the Department of Energy National Laboratories and the Department of Homeland Security Science and Technology Office being two of the most prominent. These collaborations seek to develop or advance technological innovations that have multiagency applications.

Two examples of recent technology collaboration initiatives are tunnel detection and hyperspectral sensors. In the first, an interagency team consisting of NORAD and USNORTHCOM's Joint Task Force-North, DHS's Science and Technology Directorate, Immigration and Customs Enforcement, Customs and Border Protection, Army Corps of Engineers, and the National Geospatial-Intelligence Agency conducted baseline assessments in high probability locations for smuggler tunnels on the southwest border of the United States. The concept of operations called for using multiple scanning technologies to detect likely locations, fusing this information with intelligence from local law enforcement agencies, and then employing a surface penetrating technology to probe likely locations and insert systems to map the interior of the tunnels.

In another initiative, Joint Task Force-North teamed with the Civil Air Patrol, Army Strategic Command/Space and Missile Defense Command, private industry, U.S.

Forest Service, and local law enforcement agencies to conduct a test and evaluation of a low cost, unclassified, airborne hyperspectral sensor. This concept of operations called for employing advanced analysis methods and close collaboration with local law enforcement agencies to improve the capabilities in support of law enforcement.

### Mexico and Canada

Emergencies, disasters, and security have little respect for borders, so USNORTHCOM must have strong relationships with neighboring countries that share border responsibilities with the United States, Canada, and Mexico. USNORTHCOM continues to build on the longstanding Canadian partnership that produced NORAD almost 50 years ago and is broadening into other binational land- and maritime-based coordination to ensure security for both the Canadian and U.S. homelands. USNORTHCOM also promotes expanded relationships with Mexico, both in military and nonmilitary cooperation. The shared desire to provide civil protection

*USNORTHCOM must have strong relationships with neighboring countries that share border responsibilities with the United States, Canada, and Mexico*

and emergency response along our border with Mexico has allowed USNORTHCOM to participate with FEMA and Mexico's counterpart, *Dirección General de Protección Civil y Emergencias (Protección Civil)* and several other Federal partners to enhance cross-border coordination for emergency response.

The United States enjoys a longstanding Canadian-United States (CANUS) relationship through NORAD, and the CANUS Civil Assistance Plan (CAP) provides a thorough framework for mutual assistance across our common border. But this close relationship must be continuously updated as we collaboratively face new security threats. Several strategic and operational initiatives are worth mentioning. First, Canada Command provides a counterpart military command through which NORAD and USNORTHCOM can channel interagency coordination with Canadian civil agencies. Secondly, NORAD and USNORTHCOM have a full-time liaison officer at Canada Command, who has helped in getting information from Canadian civil and emergency preparedness agencies for inclusion in the NORAD and USNORTHCOM interagency training program. Additionally, some states and provinces are engaging in cross-border cooperation and incident planning, providing a foundation for Federal coordination by both countries.

USNORTHCOM is partnering with a number of Federal departments and agencies to develop a common interagency and intergovernmental approach to improve emergency preparedness and response planning and capabilities along the border with Mexico. An informal consortium has been established that, along with USNORTHCOM, includes representatives from FEMA, the U.S. Agency for International Development, and the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency. Working with and through the U.S. Embassy in Mexico, the consortium's plan is to work with appropriate Mexican government partners, both military and civilian, to develop a strategy for collaborating in emergency preparedness and response planning across our common border. The consortium has a primary goal of reinforcing the core competencies of the interagency community by synchronizing competing projects, timelines, and ownership both vertically and horizontally. It will focus on national, regional,



U.S. and Mexican naval officers discuss flight operations during combined training off Pacific Coast of Mexico

U.S. Navy (Gabe Puello)



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and state opportunities *simultaneously* with the goal to expand single agency events and make them multiagency efforts with USNORTHCOM in support. This initiative is on a fast track to produce an actionable interagency and intergovernmental implementation plan with the goal of initiating mutually supportive activities and exercises.

The cooperation and collaboration that USNORTHCOM has achieved with its interagency partners at home go a long way toward accomplishing the objectives set out in the QDR Building Partnership Capacity Roadmap and pave the way for cooperative interagency and intergovernmental activities with our Mexican neighbors.

### The Way Ahead

There is much more to do to integrate NORAD and USNORTHCOM with our interagency partners at home and with our neighbors. The goal is a more seamless environment in which there are no barriers to the free flow of information needed to protect the Nation and its citizens. We must move beyond mere communication, which is the exchange of information between two entities, and coordination, which synchronizes the plans and operations of separate entities. Our goal is a truly *collaborative* environment in which agencies develop and execute plans and operations, and processes and cultures become fused. Unity of effort then flows from a synthesis of operating concepts. Three key efforts define our immediate lines of operations toward that goal: information-sharing, advocacy and building partnership capacity, and organizational integration.

**Information-sharing.** The objective of information-sharing is a common operating picture in which all interagency partners share an understanding of a scenario. All partners must have access to the same facts and assumptions as they analyze emerging missions and a complete understanding of each other's operating concepts in execution. There are technological, organizational, and cultural challenges to achieving such an environment.

**Advocacy/Building Partnership Capacity.** The cooperation and collaboration achieved with our interagency partners at home pave the way for cooperative interagency and intergovernmental activities with neighbors. While much work is still needed, the successes to date and the plans on the table can only create

stronger bonds among Canada, Mexico, and the United States.

**Organizational Integration.** The culture of inclusion in development at USNORTHCOM headquarters must be institutionalized in its subordinate and component organizations. For example, the command's Army component headquarters is charged with conducting homeland defense and civil support, which includes regional defense coordination elements stationed within each of FEMA's 10 regional headquarters. Developing this new construct gives USNORTHCOM a historic opportunity to build domestic regional defense, security, and emergency relationships.

Through an inclusive, collaborative, mutually supportive culture, U.S. Northern Command can be the missing link that truly facilitates full-spectrum planning and response. Ultimately, only personal relationships and experience will allow these essential relationships to grow into a powerful force that will serve a deserving and demanding American public. **JFQ**

### NOTES

<sup>1</sup> Paul D. Wolfowitz, memorandum for the Assistant to the President and Deputy National Security Advisor, Subject: Joint Interagency Coordination Groups (JIACG) Assessment, August 19, 2003.

<sup>2</sup> Current DHS representatives include a senior DHS advisor and representatives from the Federal Emergency Management Agency, Transportation Security Administration, Customs and Border Protection, and the Coast Guard. Other agencies represented include Department of State, Federal Bureau of Investigation, Central Intelligence Agency, National Security Agency, Office of the Director of National Intelligence, Army Corps of Engineers, Geological Survey, Public Health Service, and others. Only three of them are paid for by DOD, an indication of the mutual value that these agencies derive from USNORTHCOM representation.

<sup>3</sup> The Interagency Coordination Directorate is currently authorized 6 joint, multicomponent military positions and 13 DOD civilians, plus 16 contractors. It is organized into four divisions: Operations and Training, Preparedness and Plans, Law Enforcement and Security, and Concepts and Technologies, plus a Domestic Initiatives Branch that works special topics for the director.